Remarks

This is responsive to the Office Action mailed September 25, 2007. The amendments do not include any new matter and are clarifying in nature in order to more particularly point out and distinctly claim that which is allowable over the art of record.

Support for the amendments to independent claims 1, 12, 19, and 22 to more particularly recite the manner in which the PCB (340) is electrically coupled with the lead (348) can be found at least in FIG. 3 and the descriptions thereof such as at page 6 lines 12-14.

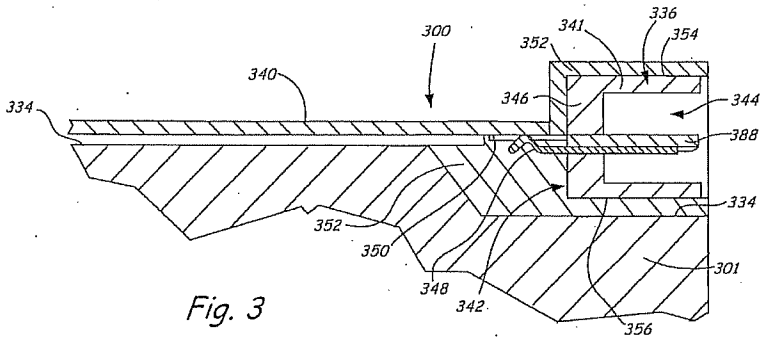


Fig. 3

FIG. 3 shows the overmold section (352) contactingly engages and thereby backs up the lead 348 on both sides of where the lead (348) is electrically coupled with contact pads 350 of the PCB (340). This structure provides a superior backing force in opposition to the pressing engagement force of the PCB (340) against the lead (348), keeping the solderless contacts in the electrical coupling relationship despite operable vibration or shock events (see, for example, specification page 1 lines 24-29; page 6 lines 17-21). By supporting the lead 348 with the overmold section 352 directly adjacent the coupling location, or even on both inboard and outboard sides of the coupling location, the overmold section 352 provides a backing force acting on the lead 348 not only in opposition to but also collinear

with the force of the PCB 340 acting on the lead 348.

Restriction Requirement

The Office acknowledged but did not act on the merits of Applicant's traversal of the restriction requirement between the presently pending claims and claim 12. Applicant has amended claim 12 to more particularly recite method steps in the same terms recited by the pending apparatus claims. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement of claim 12.

Objection to the Drawings

Applicant has amended the drawings in accordance with the Office's suggestions. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

Objection to the Specification

Applicant has amended the specification in accordance with the Office's suggestions. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under Section 112

Applicant has amended claim 5 to obviate the rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under Section 102 Over Strickler '936

Claims 1, 19, and 22 stand rejected as allegedly being anticipated by Strickler '936.

All these independent claims are amended to more particularly recite the overmold section contactingly engaging the lead to provide a backing force in opposition to the pressing engagement of the PCB against the lead. For example, claim 1 recites *the overmold section is interposed in the spatial separation and contactingly engages the lead.* Similarly, claim 22 recites *the connector has a conductive lead extending from the housing that is at least partially embedded in the overmold section so that the overmold section exerts a backing force on the lead.* Claim 19 recites *means for coupling* in means plus function form. In accordance with Section 112(6), claim 19 contemplates the disclosed structure and equivalents thereof for providing the backing force. The disclosed structure for backing up the leads includes the overmold section that contactingly engages the lead on both sides of where it is pressingly engaged by the PCB 340.

Strickler '936 does not disclose or suggest the overmold section contactingly engaging the leads, or otherwise in any way backing up the leads for structural integrity sake. Rather, Strickler '936 discloses molding an outsert 16 against the connector 17 to create a sealed electrical connector housing interface in the opening 13 (FIG. 1). The molding material flows through the openings 15a, 15b (FIG. 1) to form the flange 16a on the opposing side of the support 3.

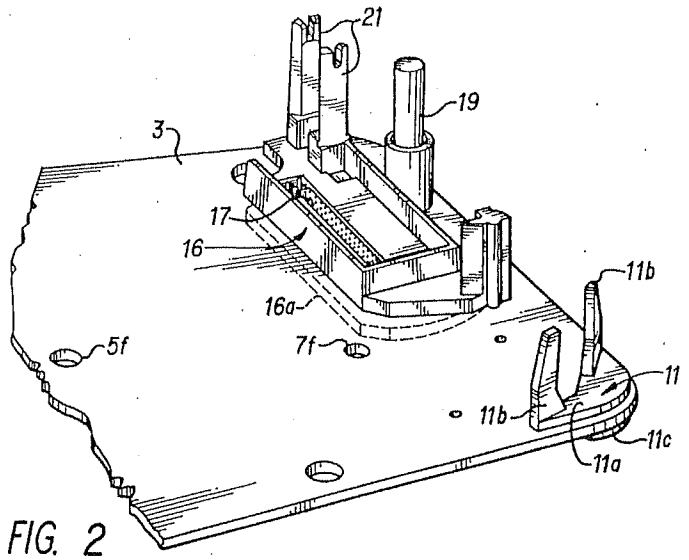


FIG. 2

However, the purpose for molding the flange 16a is to secure the outsert 16 against the support 3 (Strickler '936 col. 5 lines 24-29). Strickler '936 does not disclose or suggest either the outsert 16 or the flange 16a contactingly engaging the leads for structural integrity sake as in independent claims 1, 19, and 22.

Strickler '936 cannot sustain anticipation of these independent claims because it does not identically disclose all the features recited by these claims. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 19, and 22.

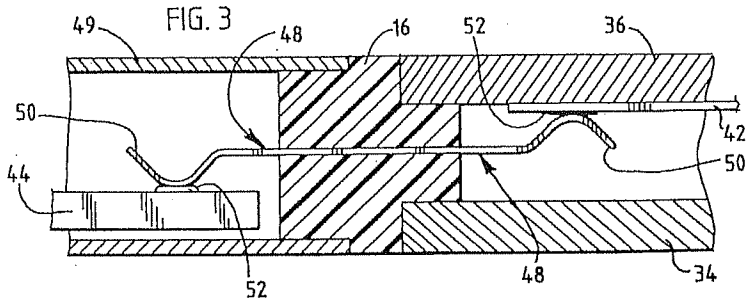
Rejection Under Section 102 Over Diel '779

Claims 1, 3-5, 22, and 24-25 stand rejected as allegedly being anticipated by Diel '779.

For the reasons discussed above, claim 1 is amended to more particularly recite *the overmold section is interposed in the spatial separation and contactingly engages the lead at a first location between the housing and where the PCB is electrically coupled with the*

lead, and the overmold section contactingly engages the lead at a second location between a distal end of the lead and where the PCB is electrically coupled with the lead.

The contacts 48 in Diel '779 are cantilevered from the center section 16.



Diel '779 does not disclose or suggest supporting the contact 48 at the second location between the distal end of the contact 48 and where the pad 52 is electrically coupled with the contact 48.

Claim 22 is amended to more particularly recite *the connector has a conductive lead extending from the housing that is at least partially embedded in the overmold section so that the overmold section exerts a backing force on the lead in opposition to and collinear to a pressing engagement force of the PCB against the lead.* However, in Diel '779 the force exerted by the center section 16 acting on the lead 48 is offset from, not collinear to, the force of the PCB 44 acting on the lead 48. This cantilevered lead electrical coupling, lacking cooperative inboard and outboard backing of the lead, is representative of the problems associated with previously attempted solutions that are resolved by the present embodiments as claimed.

Diel '779 cannot sustain anticipation because it does not identically disclose all the features recited by independent claims 1 and 22. Applicant respectfully requests

reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 22 and the claims depending therefrom.

Rejection Under Section 103

Claims 2 and 23 stand rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over Strickler '936. However, these claims are allowable at least for the reason that they depend from an allowable independent claim, for reasons set forth above, and recite additional features. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2 and 23.

Rejection Under Section 103

Claims 2, 6-7, and 23 stand rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over Diel '779. However, these claims are allowable at least for the reason that they depend from an allowable independent claim, for reasons set forth above, and recite additional features. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2, 6-7, and 23.

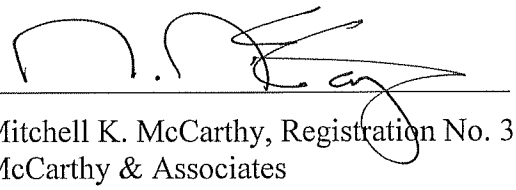
Conclusion

This is a complete response to the Office Action mailed September 25, 2007.

Applicant has also requested herewith a telephone interview if the Office finds the amendments herein do not obviate all standing rejections. The interview is necessary to clarify the claimed subject matter and what the cited references disclose.

The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned should any questions arise concerning this response or for any other matter pursuant to this application.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

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